



Youth in Teen Fitness Program

Teen Fitness Program on the Rise

A study in the journal of the American Medical Association finds that 33.6 percent of American adolescents (12 to 19 years old) have "low fitness" as compared to 13.9 percent of adults. These figures are even higher for girls and youth of color.

With this in mind, Seattle Parks and Recreation's Health and Fitness Signature Program initiated an expansion of fitness programs for teens at all our teen centers and three community centers last summer.

Under the coordination of program staff Idris Beauregard, the "Express Fitness" provides teens with two certified trainers who create a tailored program of weight training, stretching, step aerobics, palates, running, and sport-specific skills and drills. At the conclusion of each quarter the teens participate in fitness challenges in various sports.

The program is co-sponsored by the nonprofit Austin Foundation, which caters to inner city at-risk youth.

Teens enjoy the challenge and fun of participating in the program. Said one participant: "I like this program, it helps me stay in shape!"

Ken's Corner

An Enduring Partnership

Congratulations to ARC and advisory council members on a very successful annual meeting. I was sorry not to be there in person (it took a root canal to keep me away!), but I heard great reports from many sources. Your attendance and enthusiastic participation tell me that our partnership is as strong and vital as ever. I'm certain that the modernization process will only strengthen these bonds.

I also wanted to acknowledge and applaud the deserving winners of recognition awards at the meeting (see Anna Martin's report in this newsletter). These outstanding individuals and advisory councils, volunteers and staff, remind us all why we're in the business of parks and recreation. Congratulations!

Spring is approaching and we are already extremely busy with our "routine" work of organizing and delivering recreation programs, working on projects funded by the Pro Parks Levy, Community Center Levy and other sources, and maintaining and improving hundreds of parks and facilities. Our "new" centers in the International District and Yesler are full of life; Northgate will open this summer; and the construction bids for the Montlake, Laurelhurst and Van Asselt projects are in and those centers will be completed later this year.

As a matter of professional development and pride, we are also taking the time to connect with other park agencies in the Pacific Northwest and across the nation. In April, we will meet with our colleagues in the state at the annual meeting of the Washington Recreation and Parks Association in Vancouver, Washington. Our staff will be making presentations on diversity in aquatics, service learning and the city's innovative Race and Social Justice initiative. In May, I will be going the Urban Parks Summit in Chicago to confer with parks and recreation officials from around the country and their nonprofit partners. Joining me at this conference are representatives from our most important partners: ARC, the Board of Park Commissioners and the Seattle Parks Foundation. Capping off the year, in October, Seattle will play host to 10,000 parks and recreation professionals and their families at the national convention of the National Recreation and Parks Association. You'll be hearing much more about the NRPA conference in the coming months.

—Ken Bounds, Superintendent

ARC Annual General Meeting

The ARC Annual General Meeting was held on Monday, March 6 at McCormick & Schmick's overlooking Lake Union in Seattle. Attendance this year was larger than it's ever been! There were approximately 150 people with representation from 34 out of our 38 advisory councils.

This year's meeting focused on the process of modernizing the partnership between ARC and its 38-member advisory councils and Seattle Parks and Recreation. The purpose of this process is to create a more efficient partnership that operates as one partner with the Parks Department rather than 38, while, at the same time, maintaining and enhancing the legacy of individuality and good work at the advisory council level.

Kathy Scanlan, a consultant who has been working closely with ARC and Parks on the partnership modernization, presented an overview of the process. Bill Keller, ARC Executive Director, B.J. Brooks, Parks Deputy Superintendent, and I all spoke about various aspects of the process. There was a question-and-answer session after the speakers.

The goal of modernization is to develop a strategic plan to strengthen ARC's role to be a voice for the system as a whole. A Steering Committee consisting of eight Parks staff, eight ARC Board members and eight advisory council representatives met a number of times to develop a mission, values, vision, goals and strategies for the future, and recommended roles for Parks, ARC and advisory councils.

During 2006, we will update the partnership documents to reflect the revised roles and responsibilities, and a system-wide budgeting and reporting process will be developed. In addition, the ARC Board will review and redefine its governance structure to better meet the needs of the system as a whole. To accommodate this governance structure redefinition,

the current Board membership will be retained until the new governance structure is implemented.

The ARC Annual General Meeting was an opportunity to celebrate the success of the advisory council system and to recognize people and advisory councils for their outstanding efforts during the year. The following awards were presented at the meeting:



Darrell Drew

◆ **ARC President's Award:** Presented to **Darrell Drew**, Magnolia Advisory

Council and ARC Board for his enthusiasm and "system" thinking.

◆ **Advisory Council of the Year Award:** Presented to **Mount Baker Boating Advisory Council** for successfully raising over \$2 million to expand its facility.

◆ **Most Improved Advisory Council Award:** Presented to Loyal Heights Advisory Council for strengthening its advisory council during the year.

◆ **Special Service Award:** Presented to **Jackie Ramels**,

Alki Advisory Council and departing ARC Board member for her nine years of service on the board.

◆ **Star Performer Award:** Presented to **Nick Bicknell** for his dedication and support of the Special Programs activities.

◆ **Fabiola Woods Inspirational Award:** Presented to **Monica Mathews** and **Charlett Shoecraft** from Van Asselt Advisory Council for their grant writing success.

Elections were held for 2006 Opportunity Fund Committee members. The Opportunity Fund Committee solicits donations from ARC and advisory councils for an ARC grant program called the Opportunity Fund. This committee also reviews grant requests for the funds and makes a determination of how the funds should be awarded. There were four positions available for election this year. **Darrell Drew** and **Carol Richardson** were re-elected to the committee and **David Stubblefield** and **Kristi Lyn Carroll** were elected to fill the other two positions. The members of the 2006 Opportunity Fund Committee are: **Darrell Drew, Belinda Green, Cathy Garrison, Julie Morse, Alan Stowers, Peter Marx, David Stubblefield** and **Kristi Lyn Carroll**.

Thanks to all of you who helped make this year's ARC Annual General Meeting a success.

– Anna Martin, ARC President

CLASS Helps Us Evaluate Programs

For the first time, we are able to use information from the CLASS software system to conduct program evaluation surveys like the one we recently did for our before- and after-school programs and our pre-school programs. While it wasn't without a couple hitches, overall we had a good response and learned some interesting things.

Of the 747 surveys we sent to child care participants, 19% responded. 34% of participating families learned of the program via the site brochure (either mailed to their home or picked up at the site), 27% were referred by the school and 15% were referred by a friend. On a scale of 1-4 (4=very satisfied), satisfaction with the overall program received a 3.43 average with the weakest area being the ease of registration. On a scale of 1-4 (4 = very satisfied), overall satisfaction with the community centers received a 3.56.

Of the 246 surveys sent to pre-school program participants, 27% responded. 38% of participating families learned of the program via the site brochure (either mailed to their home or picked up at the site) and 25% were referred by a friend. On a scale of 1-4 (4=very satisfied), satisfaction with the overall program received a 3.56 average with the weakest area being availability of program information. On a scale of 1-4 (4 = very satisfied), overall satisfaction with the community centers received a 3.52.

Among the other findings:

◆ When asked if they would enroll again, 84% of preschool respondents and 99% of child care respondents said yes.

- ◆ When asked if they would recommend the program to others, 88% of preschool respondents and 90% of child care respondents said yes.
- ◆ When asked if they would enroll in other programs at the site, 88% of preschool respondents and 80% of child care respondents said yes.

We look forward to learning more about other recreation programs at community centers and other facilities, as our pools, small craft centers and environmental learning centers receive and begin using the CLASS software system.

Short Takes

Dunkin' Dogs: Seattle pooches got to dog-paddle in Queen Anne Pool on Saturday, Feb. 4. The swim in the heated pool is made possible by the closure of the pool for preventive maintenance.



Parks worked with Public Health – Seattle & King County to clear the way for this fun event for Fido, and Health approved the operating guidelines. After the event, the pool was drained and cleaned, and underwent its regular preventive maintenance. The pool was closed to the public during this time and reopened on Feb. 21.

Violence Prevention Training: The South Park Community Center Advisory Council approved funds to start a Violence Prevention Parent Training Program (Fortaleciendo Familias y Comunidades) for South Park neighborhood parents. This program will be held once a week for 12 weeks. Some of the funds will come from a Mayor's grant, but most will come from the advisory council. This program will help South Park parents learn how to guide their children's growth through positive reinforcement rather than through violence. The program will be taught in Spanish by two trained teachers (Isabel Mireles and Monica Duarte) who are bilingual Spanish/English.

In Memoriam: Mele Feiloakitau, longtime Yesler Community Center Advisory Council member and former Associated Recreation Council board member passed away in American Samoa on Feb. 1, 2006. The Yesler Advisory Council and staff celebrated her life with her family and friends at Yesler Community Center on Saturday, March 18 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Credits

Anna Martin, ARC Board President; Bill Keller, ARC Executive Director; David Takami, Editor; Margarite Hargrave, Designer.

For information or comments please call or e-mail David Takami at 206-684-8020, david.takami@seattle.gov

Mrs. Dorothy Poplawski, a Hiawatha Advisory Council member for the past 30 years, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 23. She also taught Tiny Tots Preschool and Tap Dance for more than 20 years at Hiawatha. Mrs. Dorothy was working on a history book for Hiawatha about the West Seattle community when she passed away.

Youth Speaks Program awarded \$25,000: Langston Hughes Youth Speaks program was awarded \$15,000 from Starbucks and \$10,000 from ArtPatch. These program funds will support writing residencies in local high schools and the annual Teen Poetry slam.

Camp Long Fundraiser: The "Coffee House Fundraiser" was held on Feb. 25, raising \$2,200 to support Camp Long programs.

Teen Mosaic Project: Teens at Bitter Lake Community Center worked with a visual artist learning how to do mosaic tile art. They have completed a 25 panel mosaic spelling "Bitter Lake Community Center" on the fence facing N. 130th St. outside the center.



Black History Programs

Seattle Parks and Recreation celebrated Black History Month in novel ways. During the month of February, staff at Green Lake Community Center posed questions of the day around Black History to the public. Sample questions: Who was the first African American to reach the North Pole? How many African Americans have served on the Supreme Court? How many gold medals did Jesse Owens win in the Berlin Olympics? The program was so successful Green Lake staff will continue the program in March for National Women's History Month.

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center hosted its annual fundraiser on Feb. 12 and honored the late great playwright August Wilson. Also in February, Langston Hughes presented a reading of "Edge of Blue Light" a play that explored the challenges women of color face living with HIV/AIDS, and staged an Afro-Cuban musical called "Mabaire! Don't Forget Me!"

Yesler Community Center and our Westbridge and Densmore shops hosted the Black Film Festival, screening several films for City employees.

Survey of Facility Users

Parks' Enterprise Division and a consultant conducted an interesting and important survey of users of our facilities last fall to help us better tailor future program offerings. In an interview of 272 Seattle residents, especially families with children, the survey found that:

- ◆ 93% of respondents have visited a Seattle park in the last year. The average number of visits per year by the respondents is 26.
- ◆ 58% of respondents have visited a Parks community center in the past year. The average number of visits per year by the respondents who visited a community center was 7.
- ◆ Walking is the most frequent use of parks – 35% of respondents go to parks to walk. Active sports, taking children to the park, and walking the dog were the next most frequent activities.
- ◆ People get the information about recreation activities from the web (36%) and newspapers (31%). Just 10% get information from fliers and mailers.
- ◆ Gym and fitness centers, cooking classes, and dance and performing arts, and wine, cheese and chocolate tasting events were some of the highest-ranked activities.
- ◆ Approximately 30% of the respondents reported feeling unsafe in our parks and avoid them because of perceived safety issues.



The results will help us evaluate and determine opportunities for facility improvements and added revenue. Staff will analyze the data and make recommendations on possible actions.

Special Events

March 25, April 1, 29, May 6, 20, 27, and June 10

Discovery Park's West Point Lighthouse Open to the Public, noon to 4 p.m.

March 25

Not so Antique Ravenna Road Show (flea market), Ravenna-Eckstein CC, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

April 8

Bunny Hop Fun Run (1-2 miles), Magnuson Park/CC, 10 a.m.



April 12

Spring Break Kids Carnival, Magnuson CC, 12:30 to 3 p.m.

April 12

Toddler Spring Fling, Bitter Lake CC, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

April 14

Decorate your own baskets, Meadowbrook CC, 6:30 p.m.

April 14-15

Spring egg hunts at most community centers; check our web site for times and locations: www.seattle.gov/parks

April 15

Pancake Breakfast, Alki CC, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Spring Pancake Social, Delridge CC, 10 a.m. to noon